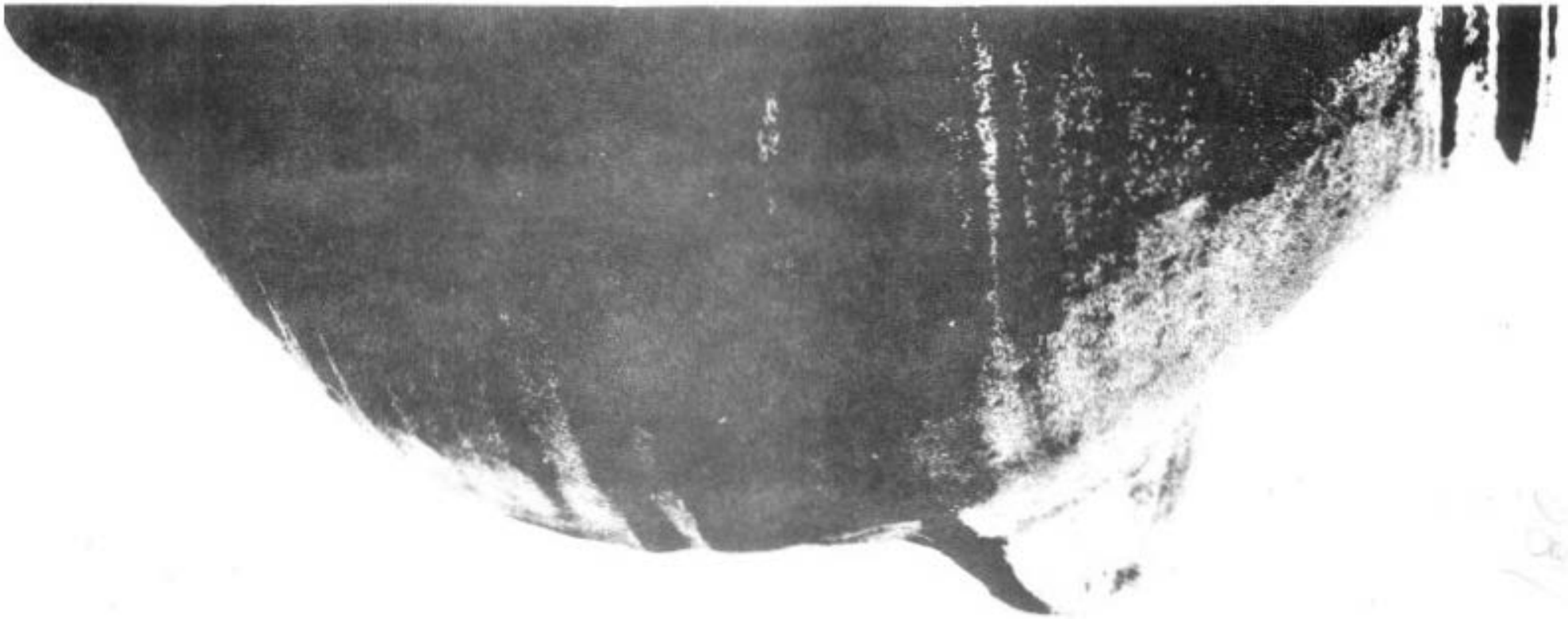
WESTERN POTTER



Cover - profile of a
pot by Wayne Ngan.

This isn't going to be much of an editorial.

It's well past midnight, I've lost the last part of Don's article on stacking a kiln and will have to re-type it from notes, I was going to take this issue in to Vancouver tomorrow morning to be printed up and I haven't got all the material for it, AND my car is in the garage for repairs, and without it how do I get materials and a worker to the Mission Faire site to build me a booth, and I have a week to do two weeks' work to have enough pottery for the Kiwanis Fair in North Van. and I paid my $12.00 for a booth there several months ago never dreaming that it would end up this rushed -- rushed, of course, but not THIS rushed.

I could go on and on, but I'll spare you.

Who knows what the next issue will be like? Ye gads! it will be Christmas then! And the Hycroft Sale will be all over.

Don't let's think about it.

I'll just shut my mind to it and get busy re-typing Don's article.

See you

(I hope),

Ruth

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor: In the last issue of the "Western Potter" we feel that the impression was given that our group had just started to use local materials with Frances Hatfield at her workshop with us this spring.

This impression is not a true one, we must give credit to Zeljko Kujundzic, who started us off by finding a local clay seam at his workshop and giving us a recipe using this clay in the glaze.

Then, too, our own B.C. Guild of Potters sponsored a 10-day workshop here in 1969, when Jack Wells, Reg Dixon, Charmian Johnson and Brian Johnstad, assisted by Ellin Chamberlain continued the work of testing local clays.

In 1970 Jan Grove gave us an excellent workshop in glazing.

We would like to acknowledge the work these fine potters have done with us on using local materials. They gave us the background to make our workshop with Frances so successful.

May we congratulate you on your last issue of the "Western Potter". It is one of the best yet. The article by Jean Marie Weakland will prove most helpful to us. We are planning to make her suggestions the basis of our monthly work programmes next winter.

Yours truly,

Ruth Flower,
Publicity Chairman,
Cariboo Potters' Guild,
Box 5000, Williams Lake.

PRESS RELEASE

Zeljko Kujundzic, now teaching pottery at the Pennsylvania State University, has just been elected a member of the International Academy of Ceramics with headquarters in Switzerland.

The Academy's membership is drawn from 67 countries and its objective is the advancement of ceramic art and technology in all its forms and functions.

In addition to this international recognition, Mr. Kujundzic's exhibition, mainly of drawings, paintings and wood block prints, in Lima, Peru, has been taken over by the U.S. Embassy there and is going to be the inaugural exhibition at the opening of the new U.S. Cultural Center in the Inca Capital, Cuzco, in September.

The exhibition is also going to be shown in the Art Center of Arequipa, before it is returned to Pennsylvania in October.

(Picture, page 11)

ASH GLAZES

A friend of mine found a horse skeleton, burnt it, put it on a pot and the resulting glaze was a beautiful subtle gray-green speckled matt.

Most ashes are a flux and need a bit more work than that, but are just as rewarding.

Ashes can be obtained from any wood or vegetable matter and from any fireplace (unless the fireplace has had a lot of paper burnt in it. Paper often has a lot of china clay in it which changes things considerably) but no two batches are the same. They contain varying amounts of silica, alumina, potash, lime, iron oxide, phosphorus, magnesia and other elements.

If you are interested in mixing your own ash glazes I suggest you get quite a lot of ash at one time as each new batch will need to be tested before use.

The first step in preparing the ash is to sift it dry through a coarse sieve to remove the large un-burnt pieces. (Caution: always use gloves when handling ash because of it caustic properties. It actually contains lye.)

Next you mix it with water and pass it through a 60 or 80 mesh sieve. Some people wash the ash and decant it until the water is clean but too much washing will remove the soluble alkalies and potash from the ash. Others prefer to use the ash un-washed.

Next you let it sit, remove the excess water and dry what's left. Break up the dry lumps and it's ready to use.

Now the fun part begins. As a start in working out your own ash glazes use simple combinations with glaze materials you have on hand. For example mix one part of ash to one part feldspar and then vary the amounts of each. (See Jean Marie Weakland's instructions for doing a line blend in the last issue of "Western Potter".)

Any materials can be used, such as clay, whiting, flint, colemanite, talc, dolomite, red clay, slip clay, nepheline syenite or any frits etc.

Combinations with 2 or 3 other materials should also be tried, like ash, feldspar and clay, or ash, feldspar and whiting, (See Jean Marie's article on triaxial and quadraxial blends in this issue.)

If it fires too stiff or dry add more ash or other flux and if it's too fluid add more clay.

Ash by itself is usually thin and watery and will turn to glass at cone 10.

Another way to use ash is in any stiff or dry glaze you already have. Just add ash in different quantities till you get the desired effect.

For color you can use any of the oxides used in other glazes. Iron and rutile are especially effective in a reducing kiln and have been used extensively in Japan. Ash glazes can be used in oxidizing or reducing kilns and are well worth the effort.

The "Tactile" issue of May, 1971, has an article by Robin Hopper, "Glaze Making Simplified - Ash Glazes", which you will find very helpful. "A Potter's Book" by Bernard Leach has ash glaze formulas used by Japanese Potters.

"Watch out ! "Rattlesnake !" "It went right over your foot!" Whose foot ? Mine ! And I stood petrified in Petrified Coulee in the Alberta Badlands while the more experienced members of the party gently herded the rattler away. Fortunately it was a cool day and the snakes were feeling sluggish. We saw several more and that was the only one that even moved. I heard reports that a scorpion had been seen, too, but was just as glad I missed that.

We saw a petrified dinosaur backbone imbedded in a cliff and I brought home a fairsized piece of dinosaur bone and some scraps of age old oyster shells.

All this was during the course of a three day tour of Medicine Hat and vicinity hosted by the Alberta Potters' Association. There were some 80 to 90 potters gathered there from all over Alberta, some from Saskatchewan, and quite a few from B. C., one from Montana, and Gordon Barnes and Gwen Sands from Ontario. Gwen, as you know, edits "Tactile" for the Canadian Guild of Potters, as well as "Craft Dimensions" for the Canadian Guild of Crafts and "Craft Ontario" for the Ontario Craft Foundation. I appreciated getting an opportunity to talk with her.

Each day we gathered at Luke Lindoe's house and piled into three buses for the day's tour. The first day we went through plants located in Medicine Hat. We didn't actually tour the Plainsman Clay plant but we we gathered there between tours and caught a glimpse of what was going on. Across the tracks there was a whole row of round dome kilns now unused but I was told they were all salt-glazed inside from firing salt-glazed sewer pipe, and we found a long pile of beautiful salt glazed shards. (Irresistible! I brought home a few.)

We went through a brick and tile plant where everything was all automated and electronic. Big machines that methodically cut texture and spew out clay products. Next, a plant producing electricity insulators where men were turning out huge insulators with jigs and crews of girls were boring holes and sanding and glazing by hand. They were using two glazes, a lovely metallic iron glaze and a plain grey shiney glaze. The iron glaze is old-fashioned- the new grey glaze is the one that is in. Another shard pile with all kinds of

fascinating things. (you guessed it ! I brought some home !) (I wonder why the old car had such a hard time making it home through the mountains.)

Then we went to Altaglass and watched glass blowers at work. They were producing a line of sweet cute birds and fish but with Stan's article fresh in my mind I was gleefully noting Gaffer's benches, marvering tables, punty irons, etc. Did you know that when a glass blower gives a little huff into the blow pipe there is a definite pause while his breath travels down the pipe, and then the glass puffs out ?

In the evening we all attended the first annual meeting of the Alberta Potters' Association. I hope to have an outline of their organizational set-up for a future issue of the "Western Potter".

The next day we went into the Cypress Hills and saw the clay pits where the Plainsman clay is dug. A hot, hot day, blinding sun on dazzling white clay banks. This is where Sitting Bull brought his tribe for a while after cleaning up on Custer and you can still find the rings of stones where their teepees were. We had a real old-fashioned picnic in the grass at the side of the road, blessedly in the shade of a poplar "bluff".

In the evening a party at Luke Lindoe's house, a display of pottery by members of the group on the lawn, and a chance to meet and talk.

The third day was the day of my contact with the rattlesnake. We went bumbling over the trackless prairie in three buses. A strange sight. And suddenly there we were without warning at the edge of an abyss full of weird eroded shapes. We were warned about rattlesnakes, and the exhausting climb back up again - the need to gauge our strength and turn back before we'd taken on too much. Well, the climb back up didn't bother me a bit.

This last day culminated in a barbecue on a farm by the river but I was overdue for a family re-union back home in Sask. and reluctantly took my leave, hoping that the next time the Alberta Potters organize any kind of pottery gathering I'll be there.

Ruth Meechan

FIRE AWAY ON GLAZE EXPERIMENTATION

In the last issue you were given instructions for testing two materials in a line blend.

From those tests which are not satisfactory with just two materials make an educated guess for a third material which may be blended into a tri-axial sequence. You may already have all the line blends tested; if so, place them on the table in the form of a triangle. Use the diagram on page 9 to determine the quantity of each of the ingredients needed to make the tests for the inner part of the tri-axial.

When you have done several tri-axials, compare them for similarities and then look for other possible combinations. Always keep looking fot the relationships which occur between tests using a common ingredient. You become more familiar with the individual materials as a result of this awareness.

As with the line blend, all the tests in the tri-axial will not be perfect glazes. Because, to date in this experimentation, all tests have graduated at the rate of 20 parts per step, you may want to run some inbetweens using steps of five or ten. Maybe an adjustment of 5 or 10 on one direction or another might be sufficient to cause a melt, or stiffen an over-active ingredient. If that doesn't produce results, study some more and consider using a fourth material. At this point you would go to the quadraxial. (See diagram on page 10).

This system of testing was used by Robin Hopper in his article on "Low-fire Leadless Glazes" in the October 1970 issue of "Western Potter".

In the quadraxial diagrammed for this sequence, the line blends or outer lines of the square have been kept in the same ratio as the first line blends and the tri-axial borders so that they may be interchanged in your experiments. Use the line blends already tested and then follow the diagram to obtain the quantities of materials for the inner portion of the quadraxial.

If you do not care to start with all the experimentation before this stage, you could choose materials from the feldspar, silica, limestone and clay classifications to make the quadraxial test. Another set of four types of materials which could be used are feldspar, ash, clay and silica. By varying one of the materials, such as the clay, you will come up with a different sequence and possibly a different color or texture of glaze. Again, keep a record so you know what you have done and can reproduce it. As you can see, the combinations are endless and without a record you will go zany.

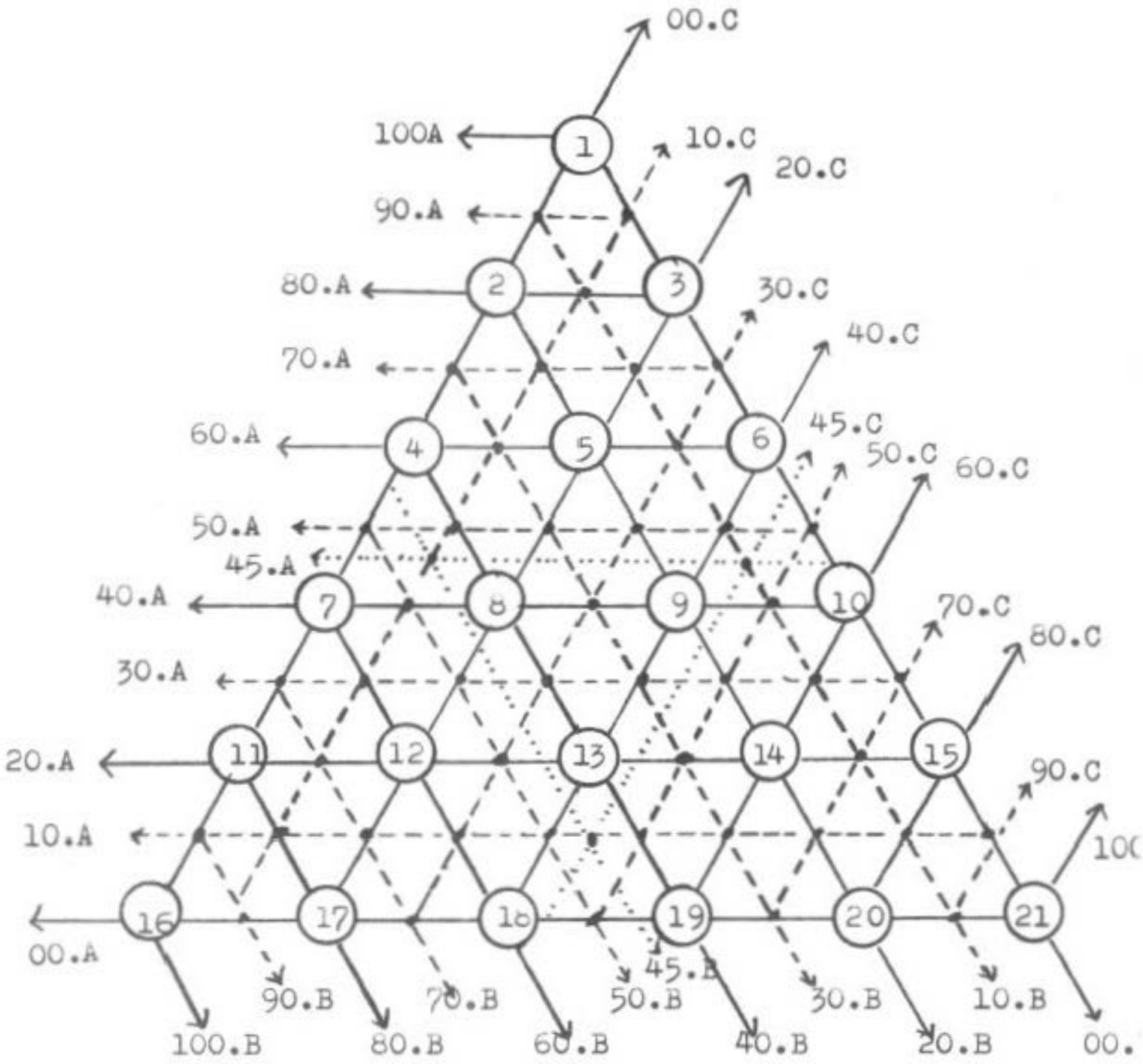
By the time you have run several tri-axials or quadraxials you will have not only a visual and tactile appreciation for the materials used in making glazes but you will know a great deal about their characteristics in relation to other materials and the fire. By this time you will also have developed confidence should you want to begin working with the limit formula, or, if you'd prefer, you are quite able to develop your own glazes by continuing this process.

Do not forget the possibilities of adding oxides to a base glaze for even more variety. You may choose to stop experimentation once you have developed one very good base glaze to which 3 or 4 oxides provide you with as many variations as you desire. Using one base glaze is a very economical way of working and by no means limiting. Anyway, whatever method you choose - get busy and you will enjoy developing your own unique glazes !

Jean Marie Weakland

WHERE TO GET IT

For dolomite, try Genie Industries, They get their dolomite direct from the mine in Creston B. C.



TRI-AXIAL

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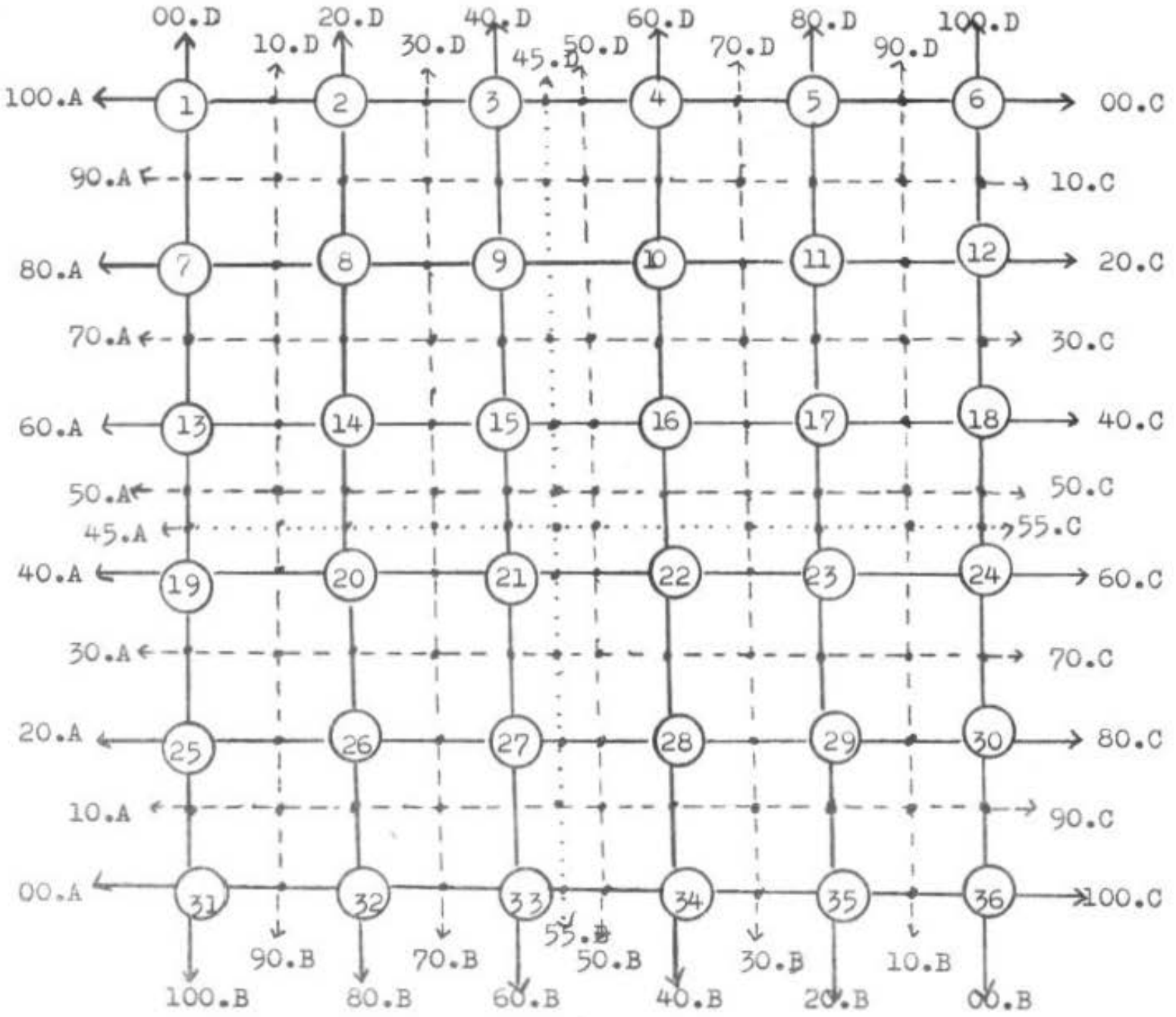
needed for that particular test.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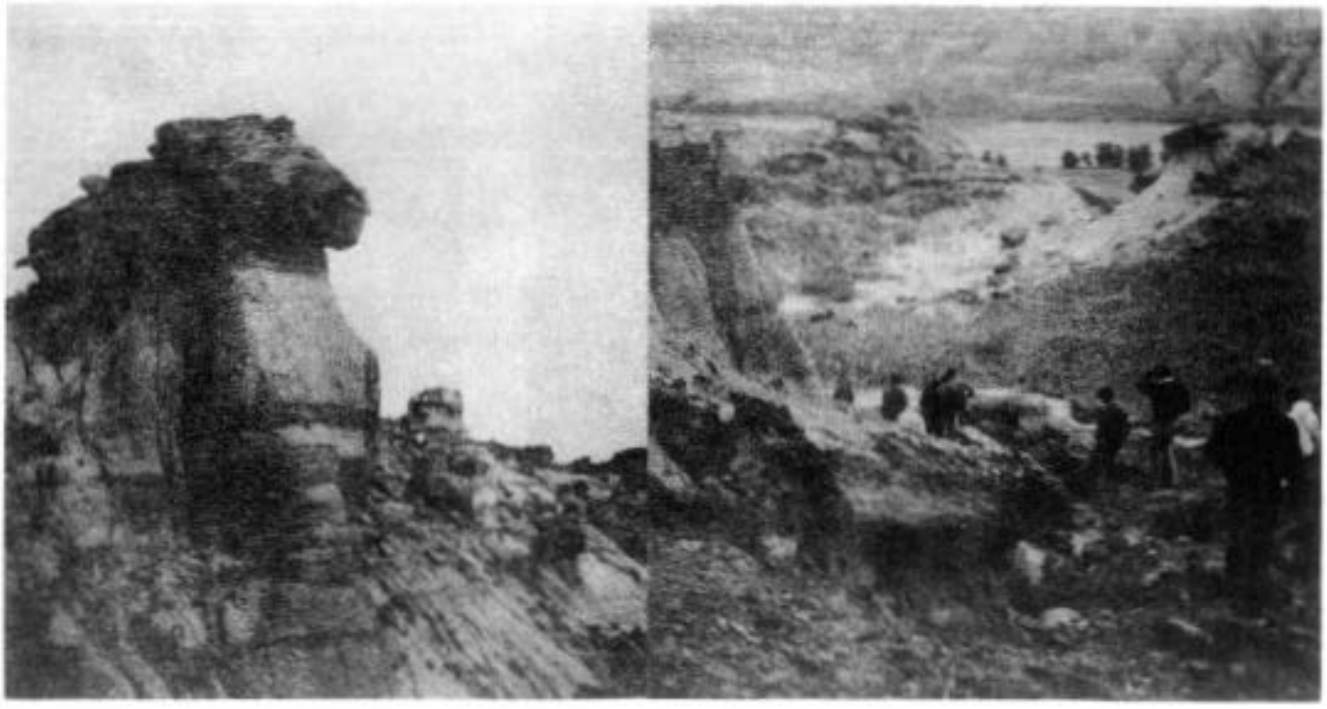


Above:
Alberta Badlands.

Right:
Zeljko Kujundzic

Colson Kiln Building Workshop

POETRY IN CLAY

Wayne Ngan has been an outstanding potter for some time, and his show at Handcraft House in North Vancouver this July showed that he has gained in stature. In the past he has sometimes shown a tendency to over decorate but he has curbed this urge and produced pottery with a confident verve and life. He has managed to increase the grace and lilting lift of his shapes without losing any of the vigour.

I hope that many of you were able to see his show. For those of you who didn't I can only tell you how terribly disappointed I am that something went wrong with Jean Marie's camera, and we are unable to have any pictures for you.

ON LOADING KILNS

These are the points most often overlooked by students loading kilns. See if they apply to you.

The basic principle is that kilns heat by convection, conduction and radiation. We desire to heat the ware, not air spaces in the chamber, therefore we must load the kiln evenly and tightly.

Biscuit Firing

1. Pots should not touch sides of kiln, or elements. Generally, 1" away from elements, or 2" away from wall and roof on "live" fuel kilns.
2. Pots can be stacked one upside down on the other provided the rims or lips have sufficient strength, and provided the rims or lips match up evenly. These columns can go several feet up if the heaviest and strongest pots are on the bottom. This is called rim to rim or foot to foot stacking.
3. Pots may be placed inside each other provided no pressure is placed against walls of the host pot. These inside pots may tend to end up harder than the other pots because the host pot tends to retain the heat around them.
4. Greenware should be completely dry before firing. Using your kiln as a drying oven often causes cracking and warping.
5. Pots dried on uneven or warped boards often come out of a biscuit kiln warped due to stresses they acquire while drying. Do not dry your pots in drafts for similar reasons.
6. Greenware can be stacked in columns outside the kiln then placed in the chamber. This saves time and is a safer loading method.
7. Biscuit fire to the same temperature each time, usually cone 010, 06 or 04. Then, if your glazes always have the same consistency you will find them much easier to apply to the same thickness.
8. In small kilns shelves are not generally used. You must judge the weight of your ware and use shelves where you think it necessary.
9. Biscuit firing shouldn't be done too fast. Generally, 1 hour is required for every 100 degrees C. of temperature rise. I have

fired clay products 14" thick without cracking but that takes two days of firing. The thicker your ware the slower you fire.
10. Vacuum out element grooves and you will prolong the life of your elements.

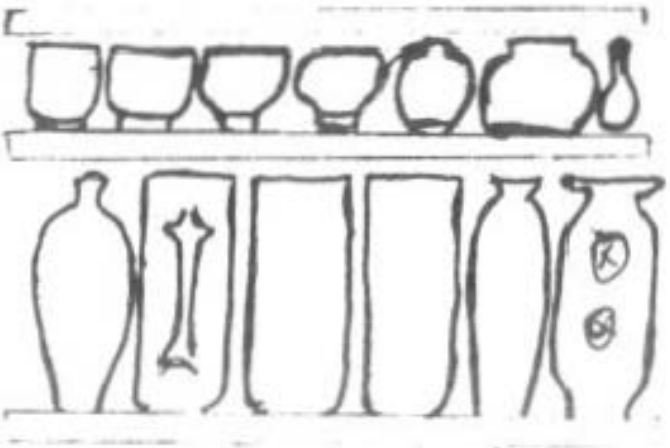
Glaze firing

1. No surface that is glazed may touch another surface or the two will fuse together.
2. Shelves, lid seats and flanges can be treated with kiln wash to avoid sticking problems. Clay that is high in iron tends to make lids stick at high temperatures so a wash should be used then. Waxing the flange or seat gives no protection from this trouble.
3. Fire lids on the pots. This prevents warping and gives equal heat to the total pot.
4. Do not slide pots across shelves as it tends to flake glazes off and drop debris down below.
5. Large pots are loaded first in the kiln bottom.
6. Line up all pots of equal height and place them together on the same shelves. Clearance between pots in about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch.
7. When loading glaze ware in a gas kiln the pots are still only $\frac{1}{4}$ inch apart but usually come within 1 to 2 inches of the kiln sides and roof. The kiln's draft properties would naturally have to be considered when loading a gas or oil kiln and pots must not block exhaust ports or flues. Bricks tend to expand and move when heated so pots near the crown sometimes catch falling brick dust.
8. Shelves staggered in glaze firings in gas or oil kilns help to prevent hot spots. This staggering of heights of each layer or "bung" has to be considered along with the flame pattern you wish to establish. This judging is done through experience.
9. In electric kilns, shelves close to top or bottom of kiln will make hot spots in center of chamber.
10. No large air spaces in the chamber. If you haven't a pot to fit then put a brick in the empty space.
11. Use plenty of cones. It's cheaper than losing a load of pots because you can't see your cone, or the clay wad blows up and your cones are out of sight. Use cone setters or mix clay wad with vermiculite.

12. It is common to see shelves encrusted like ships' bottoms with kiln wash and this is stupid. When wash gets thick it should be scraped down and applied thinly.
13. Avery Huyghe's suggestion of using clay cookies under your pots will save work if your glazes are fluid.
14. Shelves with 3 supports don't juggle, and 3 posts are easier to load around than four.
15. Check your support posts frequently. Keep their ends flat. Shelves won't stick to the white triangular posts available from commercial outlets. If you use clay leveling pads then sprinkle them with silica to avoid them sticking to your shelves.
16. A flash light helps when you're loading to see into difficult places. It will pay for itself in no time. A small mirror can be a handy aid too, especially in a top loader.

Don Hutchinson

Biscuit fire stacking



Glaze fire stacking

MEETING A TRADITIONAL JAPANESE POTTER

Japanese potter Kazuo Akiyama from Mashiko was staying with me for the last ten days of his visit to Canada. He wanted to meet local potters and see their work before he left. He had intended to stay in Canada until the end of September but took ill in June and had to leave and wanted to see as many potters as possible in ten days. Not only did he want to meet potters but also to visit Fort Langley, Simon Fraser, U.B.C., Totem Park, Victoria and so on ! He loved GASTOWN..

Everywhere we went Mr. Akiyama went running around taking photographs, just like a typical Japanese tourist.

I didn't know many potters so I asked Meg Buckley and Dorothy Doherty to introduce us to the professional potters they knew. They were a great help and we met Robert Weghsteen, Tam Irving and Wayne Ngan.

Mr. Akiyama was impressed and happy to meet these potters and their work. I decided to invite people interested in meeting Mr. Akiyama to my little attic room. With Meg's help we called the executive of the Guild and others. The party was supposed to start at 8 but Mr. Akiyama and I didn't get there until two minutes after. Meg was already there talking to my landlady. Altogether over twenty people came. I was running around the kitchen, out to the door and up and down to the attic. Poor Mr. Akiyama was very nervous without me there. The party started like that !

We had wine, some beer, soft drinks and cheese with fruit. After a talk from Mr. Akiyama we had a question and answer period, followed by a slide show of Mr. Akiyama's collection of old Japanese pottery and examples of his own work. One old piece Mr. Akiyama would not sell for "a million dollars". We all laughed and the party went not too badly.

Next day was also a big day. We went to see Tam Irving at his studio in West Vancouver. Magnificent. Wayne Ngan was there also. It was an exciting visit for Mr. Akiyama. Tam and Wayne were interested in seeing Mr. Akiyama's slides, so we invited them and Wayne's summer school students to my attic that evening to join

a small Japanese party we were having. After seeing his slides again, Wayne showed some slides of his work, and his studio and house on Hornby Island.

Mr. Akiyama saw much pottery in B.C. in exhibitions, galleries and stores, and he was impressed by its honesty and vigour. Japan has a long traditional history in pottery, appreciated and supported by the Japanese people. He hopes more Canadian people will learn to appreciate and support the work of potters in Canada.

He left a message thanking everybody he met for their kindness, and any potter visiting Japan he will make most welcome - please visit him!

Hiro Urakami

HYCROFT TIME AGAIN!

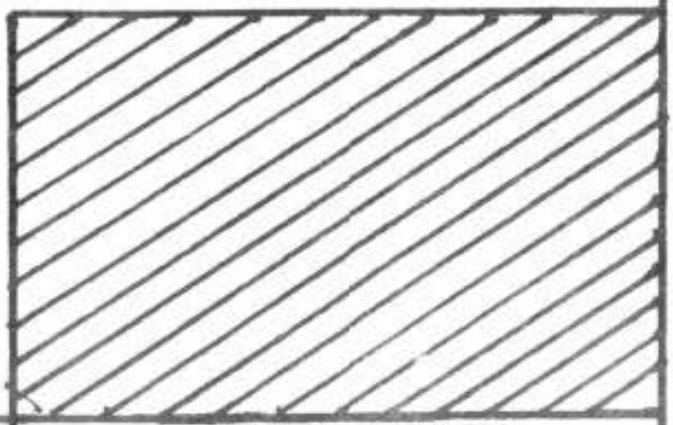
Hycroft House has been reserved for November 19th and 20th. There have been calls for going back to jurying the entries, and pleas for a new set-up. We've used the old teabox racks for a long while. What is your wish? Do we scrap them? If so, we need ideas for a new set-up.

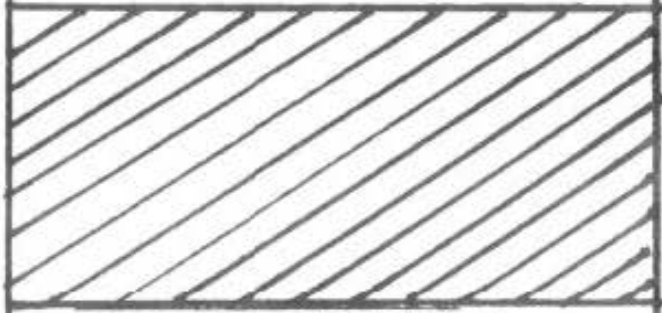
Please! send your ideas to Fay Tevendale, 914, 17th St., West Vancouver, Phone: 922-3801. Also volunteers please phone.

HANDCRAFT HOUSE

CRAFT SCHOOL

FALL Classes begin
week of Sept 20th.
POTTERY - new gas kiln!
instructor, Skip Miller
WEAVING - floor and table looms. Instructors, Mienke Mees, Setsuko Piroche and Linda Powell.
GARMENT DESIGN - Primitive clothing and decoration.
Instructor, Laara Hailley.





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All items handmade in B.C. - pottery; weaving; leather; wall hangings; candles.

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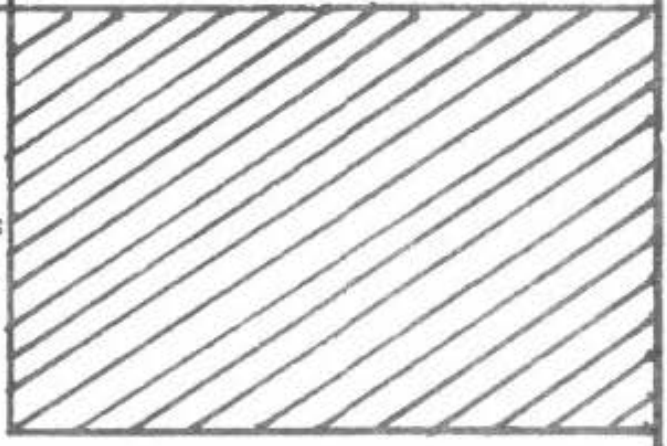

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The "WESTERN POTTER" is published quarterly by the B. C. Guild of Potters. It is mailed to members free. Membership dues are $7.00 per year for the Lower Mainland, Fraser Valley Area, and $5.00 a year for other areas. Individual copies of "The WESTERN POTTER" can be purchased by members for 25¢ each. Advertising rates are $10.00 per page, $5.00 for half page and $2.50 for a quarter of a page. Wanted or for sale ads with up to 20 words may be placed for a minimum charge of $1.00. Ads with more then 20 words will cost 5¢ extra for each additional word.

Editor: Ruth Meechan
11785 - 252 St.
Maple Ridge, B. C.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

I would like to become a member of the B. C. Guild of Potters.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ ZONE_____

Please send cheques to B. C. GUILD OF POTTERS
c/o Community Arts Council
315 W. Cordova St.Vancouver 3, B. C.

Membership Fees: $7.00 ... Lower Mainland & Fraser Valley
$5.00 ... Other Areas.
$3.00 ... Students.

1971-72 membership list will be compiled beginning April 30. All mailing will go to paid members only after April 30.

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